

City Council Special Called Meeting (Joint Meeting with Travis County Commissioners Court) Transcript – 07/20/2021

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[9:04:08 AM]

>> Judge Brown: I think that everyone else is in court. So, media, if you want to go ahead and start things up. >> Good morning, judge. >> Judge Brown: Good morning. >> The charging stations -- >> So the council looks like they're on -- >> Travillion: For the initial briefing. >> They look like they're starting or ready to start. >> Travillion: I think that they're ready. >> Judge, go ahead.

[9:05:11 AM]

>> Judge Brown: Okay, we're ready to go ahead and start. >> I wanted to check to see if you guys could hear me. >> Judge Brown: Yes. >> And I got a note from councilmember kitchen -- there she is. >> Kitchen: I made it. >> Great. >> I think we're ready to go, judge. >> Judge Brown: Okay, yeah, go ahead and start. >> We're live. >> Judge Brown: All right, good morning, everyone. This is Travis county judge Andy brown and I'm doing this remotely today. I'm going to call to order the meeting of the Travis county commissioners court, it's June 20th, 2021 and 9:05 A.M., and everyone is meeting at 700 lavaca and we have a joint briefing today. And just full disclosure, so

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I've had a stuffy nose, I got one yesterday -- a runny nose yesterday. I took an antigen test last night that came out negative. Went to get a P.C.R. Test this morning. I have not heard yet so that's why I'm -- out of an abundance of caution not coming into the office today. Hopefully that will be negative as well. But just makes me, you know, realize how -- how we need to make sure that we're still having testing available for everybody. So hopefully that is something that we can talk about through the meeting today. Let's see -- so, anyhow, I will go ahead, and call this to order and hand it over to you to call the city council meeting to order. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor Steve Adler calling to order the Austin city council meeting and, again, commissioners, thank you for letting us to participate with you and today is July 20, 2021, and 9:06. And we have a quorum present.

[9:07:13 AM]

And judge brown, I appreciate that with the symptoms that you went and got tested and we're finding that more and more people around our city may have symptoms that they feel like are allergies or feel like colds and some of those are proving out to be covid or the delta variant. So it's really important that people that have symptoms do exactly what it is that you have done here. So thanks for calling that out. We're ready to begin. >> Judge Brown: Thanks. Thanks, mayor. Do we have any callers for the Travis county public comment portion? >> Travillion: Judge, can you hear me? >> Judge Brown: Yes, sir. >> Travillion: I think that you started us out saying that it was June the 8th, and if I'm not mistaken, should we -- can we correct the record as we go forward. I thought that I heard you say -- June 8th.

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>> Judge Brown: Not June 8th. Thank you so much. June 20th. And -- actually 9:05 when we started. >> My, how time flies. >> (Indiscernible). >> Judge Brown: I'm not quite (indiscernible) Today. >> So it's July 20, 2021 and it's 9:08 A.M. >> Judge Brown: All right. Here we are. Okay, July 20th, 2021. And let's go ahead and go to public comment if we have any. >> Judge, no callers related to covid. >> Judge Brown: Excellent. Thank you so much. All right, so just as a refresher, we're going to hear

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the briefings and then we'll go through questions from members of the commissioners court. And then from the members of the city council and the mayor and then we'll close the meeting. So go ahead and pass it over to -- do we have a briefing from Dr. Walkes, I believe first of all. >> Good morning. Good morning. >> Judge Brown: Good morning. >> Can you see the slides -- there we go. >> Judge Brown: Yes. >> Okay. Next slide, please. We are currently in stage -- go to the next slide, please. We're currently in stage 3. We have just crossed the threshold yesterday with first

[9:10:16 AM]

time of having 30 cases on a seven-day moving average, so we're at the precipice of a new stage. And if that continues. And we're looking at this time at masking for unvaccinated people and partially vaccinated people and that will be changing as I go on. And I'll explain why. If you could go to the next slide, please. >> It's hard to hear. >> Okay. Can you hear me now? >> Kitchen: That's better, thank you. >> Thank you. On this slide, we are looking at a marked increase in our case numbers and an increase in the number of I.C.U. Beds and hospitalizations that have occurred in the last 14 days.

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This is happening as a result of the impact of the delta variant in our community, which has increased from being 60% of the number of people that are being diagnosed with covid-19 to a predominance in our community of 87%. And as we know -- next slide, please -- this particular variant is much more transmissible. It's more easily spread. And as we know, we decreased spread by wearing masks, and we decreased the disease and death by being vaccinated. Next slide, please. Next slide, please. So on this slide we are looking at the hospital admissions and we're seeing that all age groups

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are being hospitalized and we're seeing larger percentage of younger people being hospitalized in recent days. Next slide, please. And in this slide we're looking at that -- again, looking at ages, and we're also noting that there's an increase in the number of pediatric or children that are being admitted due to covid-19. And this is important because we've had guidance from the American academy of pediatrics and the CDC suggesting that and guiding and recommending that children wear masks who are unprotected by vaccination and that would be our children that are less than age 12. So it is important for us to protect our children and align

[9:13:20 AM]

ourselves with that guidance. Next slide, please. If we look again at admissions to I.C.U., we're seeing that all age groups are being admitted to I.C.U. And almost all are unvaccinated. And, again, masks stop the spread and vaccines stop death and disease. Next slide, please. If we look at our race and ethnicity of people who are being admitted to hospital, we're continuing to see a dispro disproportionate impact of our communities of color -- next slide -- with more blacks and hispanics being admitted to hospital

and they're also being represented here in our I.C.U. Admissions. There is a reluctance in our communities of color to be

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vaccinated due to a long-standing problem with trust of vaccines and, you know, working to get the word to those communities to improve vaccine acceptance, to get good information, and dispel misinformation so that we can, again, stop disease, severe illness and death in our community, and to decrease the impact of covid-19 on all of our citizens. Next slide, please. Next slide, please. We've received -- move back one slide -- we've received reports that we have four confirmed cases of the delta variant in our community, and as we know the delta variant is more easily

[9:15:28 AM]

transmitted, it spreads much more quickly, and, again, as I've said several times, masks stops spread. And we also know that the delta variant is effectively protected -- you'll get protection from the delta variant from being vaccinated. The levels of that protection are decreased to somewhere in the neighborhood of 60% to 80%, depending on what your source is, however, there is protection from the delta variant with vaccination. But because that protection is not as robust as it is with the original type of this virus that we started out the pandemic fighting against, um, layered protection by using masks to stop the spread is highly recommended. Next slide, please.

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In this slide we're looking at the possibility for vaccinated individuals to have covid-19 because of that slight decrease in the amount of protection that you can see with the vaccine in various scenarios. If you look back to our experience with the flu vaccine, for instance, we've had years when the flu vaccine works really well and you get the flu vaccination and you don't get sick. And then there are times when we may not catch one variant of the flu and you may have mild disease. The same thing is true with the delta variant in our case, in the case of covid. We have -- because we've had people who are unvaccinated been

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able to give this virus an opportunity to mutate, to change the way that it behaves, to change the way that it is able to develop disease in our bodies, and as a result there are some instances where if you're vaccinated you can get mild disease. And that is indeed what we're seeing. People who are vaccinated who have had mild disease. They rarely are hospitalized, but they -- because they've had mild disease or some -- maybe asymptomatic they can actually be spreading covid-19. So because of that, it's important for us to -- as the judge has just said -- to be taking precautions, he's wearing a mask, he's staying away from crowds until he knows for sure that he is not sick. And that's the responsible thing to do. And that's what we as a

[9:18:36 AM]

community need to do. And if we look at the graphs that we're seeing and the changes that we're seeing in our population and the number of cases that we're seeing, these graphs are showing us that there may be some impact with this particular part of our population. However, almost all of the cases that we're seeing right now from case investigations are in people who are unvaccinated. And almost all of the people who are being hospitalized are unvaccinated. But this is showing that we all need to take precautions. Wear masks to stop the spread. And everybody should be vaccinated to prevent severe disease and illness. We're seeing an increased number in the number of breakthrough cases this week. We had 488 as a cumulative total, up from last week's total

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of 333. 75% of the people that have had breakthrough -- vaccine breakthrough cases, i.e., people who are fully vaccinated and received both doses of the mRNA, Pfizer and Moderna vaccine, and 14 days later they're fully vaccinated -- some of those people have experienced what I was just describing on that last slide. 25% of those people were asymptomatic. So that just, again, stresses the importance of our community staying home when you're sick, wearing masks to prevent the spread and for sure getting vaccinated because these are individuals who for the most part have had mild disease. Next slide, please. This shows that what's happening in our long-term care facilities. We've had 13 -- 24 cases in the

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last 14 days in our long-term care facilities. 13 in the last week. And we see that 13 have had -- were residents and they -- seven were staff. And that of the people that were vaccinated, there were 10 vaccinated residents and six vaccinated staff. Here we're seeing that the number of people that had symptoms, those that were asymptomatic and here's where we weren't able to determine what their symptoms were. The most notable thing is that of the people that were sick in our nursing homes, none required hospitalization. They were all able to be treated as outpatients.

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And this is the proof that our vaccines work to prevent severe disease and death. And in the beginning at the outset our mission was to protect our most vulnerable and to prevent stress and strain on our hospital systems. So we've been able to accomplish that through our vaccination program, and we must continue to work to get the rest of our community vaccinated. Next slide, please. This is a slide looking at re-infections and if you could go to the next slide, please. Reinfections are described as people who have had covid-19, and they're 90 days out. We believe that the immunity that you get from being sick

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from covid-19 lasts approximately 90 days. And so after the 90-day mark, if you've developed covid-19 after that point, we call that a reinfection. If you look at this pictorial graph, somewhere along like February when we saw the impact of the vaccination program that started in late December, that we see a dropoff in the number of reinfections which anecdotally is we believe because of the fact that these individuals also were starting to receive vaccinations. Next slide, please. The U.T. Modeling group were helpful to our response throughout this response, and they did some work to look at what the impact of covid-19 is

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in our community currently with the spread of this new delta variant. And this looks at what mask category do to help us right now stop the spread of covid-19 and flatten this curve. This is a study from Germany that shows with the use of masking we see a line that's projecting upwards in the surge fashion and then that flatter line is where we are seeing the impact of masking, where we decrease with 90% compliance -- we can decrease the amount of transmission by 45%. If I can show you my screen now, I'd like to -- can you see my

[9:24:45 AM]

screen? >> No. It's not showing. >> No? >> There you go. >> Okay, that's not the screen that I want though. So let's see -- I'm going to stop sharing. I can't show you the screen that I want to, but it has a similar -- let me try -- this isn't --

[9:25:53 AM]

(indiscernible) Do you see the screen? No. Well, it's not working so I'll stop. They're showing the same thing in the recent projections that they provided us and it shows that with compliance -- with mask wearing in our community, that we can flatten our curve as well. And that is what our goal would be as we go forward. We had the opportunity to stop the spread and stop the climb of the number of cases that we're seeing. If you can go to the next slide, please. The curves that we have currently, if we look at them in the next slide, show that back in July, mid-july of 2020, on

[9:26:54 AM]

July 3rd, there was a mask mandate that was instituted. And immediately following that mask mandate we had a decline in the number of cases. So that's real world evidence that not only do masks stop the spread, but that they work. And if we can continue with our vaccination program and with the use of masking, we can take the curve that's going up on the other end of this slide right now and change its trajectory. So it is important for us as policymakers and as a community, all of whom want to see our schools open safely with our children protected by wearing masks in school, and we want to

[9:27:55 AM]

keep our economy working toward robust recovery, and we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We know what to do. We know what works. Masks stop the spread, and vaccinations stop severe disease and illness. And in our last slide we see that our -- in our progress towards herd immunity, with what we have done thus far, we have been successful in vaccinating 60% plus of the eligible population. However, this was showing what our actual success rate is in the entire population, even those who are not vaccinated. So we're at 53%. That's significant because what I'm talking about is the inclusion, not only of those who are eligible, but we're talking about those who are not eligible

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and the ones that we're most concerned about right now are children. We have 19% of our population now that's not been vaccinated. And it's important more now than ever -- more now more than ever to really stress to our loved ones, our colleagues, our friends, our family, that if they've not been vaccinated, now is the time. We need to get everybody vaccinated. If everybody could take the time to reach out to somebody and ask them to go and to get vaccinated, that would go a long way towards us getting to the point where we have the protection from severe disease and illness, but really to stop the

spread right now, everybody needs to wear a mask, to protect themselves, their loved ones, their kids, so that we can move on from this and stop this curve

[9:30:02 AM]

at the end of which now looks like a hockey stick, if you go back to the previous slide. To stop that from becoming another peak in the next couple of weeks. And I'm finished. I thank you for your time and attention. Sorry for that technical difficulties. I'll take questions whenever it's appropriate. >> Thank you, Dr. Walkes, for that data update. And I'll just run quickly through the operations, unless commissioners and council would like to ask Dr. Walkes questions about the data now? >> Judge Brown: We could do it at the end. We can just ask them all together. >> Thank you. Okay, so looking at our vaccination dashboard, you can see cumulatively we have given over 400,000 vaccine doses in

[9:31:05 AM]

community. Last week, we did 1,250. This next slide is important because it shows the data for Austin and Travis county broken out by race and ethnicity and we've added a column so that we can track our progress over time week-over-week. And so you can see the first -- the second column is important because it talks about the estimated eligible population for vaccine, and right now that is anyone 12 and over. And so we see for age groups -- or for our different groups, Asian we're at 76%. With a .8% increase over last week which is 582 shots. For the black and African-American community, we're at 28%, with less than a percent increase last week, but numerically, you know, 662

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additional vaccines in that community. Where we're seeing the greatest uptick is in our hispanic and Latino community, which I think that is -- we're moving in the right direction. We know that that community has been disproportionately impacted by covid in terms of hospitalizations and death. To see a week increase of over 3,000 additional vaccinations is -- is a huge win. And so as my friend and colleague chuck Brotherton says, you know, it's a game of inches at this point. Looking forward to these graphs it shows again the breakout of where we are in terms of distribution. Continuing to make strides in our latinx community and seeing good overrepresentation in our

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Asian community, and still opportunities for improvement with our black and African-American community in terms of distribution. This is our first dose penetration map which is not updated since the last time that you've seen it. Which is why I think that the chart that shows the incremental changes are important. We are -- our team is going to make every effort to update this map on a biweekly basis. We've overlaid the locations of all of our operations on this map. We kind of use it as our guiding point. Where do we need to be to get those numbers to shift more to green? The more green, the better. And so each week our team meets internally and with our partners in the county collaborative and then reach out to different spaces and community to see where we can set up next, or where we can send our mobile

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vaccine teams. We have eight priority zip codes that are related to the map that I've just shown you. And this is really where the rubber is going to meet the road. I'm happy that there's an influx of resources in the community that are specifically targeting health disparities with respect to covid. It will give us the opportunity to support more promotion and education as well as boots on the ground efforts, including canvassing, and allow us to continue to invest in our community partners and other organizations that have those deeper relationships with community and can be used as ambassadors to help to spread the message or direct people -- or drive people to the vaccination clinics given by the city and the county. At the start of this we set out some metrics because we want to

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make sure that we are tracking our progress and giving ourselves the opportunity to course correct wherever possible. Still celebrating being at 70% first dose vaccination and really working strategically to make sure that we can reach our second goal which is to be 70% fully vaccinated by September 1st. That deadline or that goal date becomes more important as we think about our kiddos that are about to head back to school. For our vaccine operations, we continue to have our static clinics at southeast library, little walnut creek and the Anna lark center. We will be back at turner Roberts and Virginia bell this week as well as the rock, A.T.X., the crystal, and the del

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valle opportunity center, and that is in collaboration with Travis county. As our situation increases and we're considering being at the precipice of a different stage in our community, we are realizing the need for increased testing resources, especially free testing. So the aph team is currently working to stand up static testing sites. We hope to launch this Thursday at the rec center. We have a tentative start date for our St. John's location at the old Home Depot. We are trying to make this process as easy and barrier

free as possible, allowing walk-ups and no registration necessary. We hope to add future testing locations in del valle and in

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pflugerville. In terms of our focused outreach and engagement, again, using that map as a starting point, continuing our canvassing efforts in the montopolis neighborhood in partnership. Last week at our Ibj high school site we vaccinated 75 people and at the rock atx we gave shots to 159 people. Our mini-grant programs, again, expanding our opportunity to have outreach within communities and sharing that we have events and materials that are in a variety of languages -- English, Spanish, Chinese, burmese and Vietnamese and Korean. Again, our priority populations lining up with the data -- black, African-American, Asian and hispanic, latinx immigrants and seniors.

[9:38:13 AM]

And, again, our priority zip codes overlaying with the maps so that all of our efforts are in sync with the core drivers. Of note, the zip codes with the asterisk, we were able to host more than 20 events to help to promote vaccine and to give people good information and direct them to resources. Our Pio team continues to knock it out of the park. Really appreciative of the relationship between the city and the county. Our Pio staff, they continue to collaborate to put out good messaging and we have radio promotes going on, we're trying to really dig into those personal stories, like, what is your reason for getting vaccinated. As you can see there, one person said that you can hug your grandparents again. So you can invite people into your home again.

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So you can go on vacation again or protect your kids. And so we're really continuing to reach into community and to tell those stories because that's what's going to stand, right? In those communities of color, the black community and the latinx community, there's rich traditions of oral history. So we want people to be able to really serve as ambassadors, to share those personal moments, to convince their loved ones to get vaccines. And Dr. Walkes touched on this earlier, you know, each one of us need to be responsible ambassadors. We need to follow the example of the judge. If you're sick, and you are not sure, get tested, stay home. And if you have been vaccinated, and you know someone in your circle and in your community that has questions and you're able to share your story, to

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incentivize that, that's what we need to do. And that's all we have for our prepared presentation today. I thank you all for your time. And we're open to any questions that you might have for Dr. Walkes and myself. >> Judge Brown: Thanks. I think we have chuck and constable morales will give a short update as well and then we can go to questions, if that's all right. >> Good morning, judge, mayor, commissioners. Chuck Brotherton with emergency services. I just wanted to first allow constable George morales with precinct four to update the court. And then I'll have a couple points for you and then we can get to your questions. So, constable morales, if you're ready. >> I am. Good morning, commissioners, councilmembers, judge and mayor. Our Travis county mobile vaccine collaborative has continued to target the eastern crescent and as we know it's an area where our most vulnerable people are, in the hard-to-reach areas.

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In the last two weeks we've vaccinated -- we had about 43 vaccine locations. This week we're targeting about 18 different vaccine locations. Some of those are still at the J.D. Supermarkets and we've seen an increase of a presence there for first and second doses. We're also working with our Travis county constables, precinct 1 through 5, and finding areas that are needing their areas for vaccine locations. For instance, we're going to be doing a mosque, and some in precinct 1 and also some churches that we have available out there that really want to try to coordinate with us and to get these vaccines rolling. In the last two weeks our mobile vaccine collaborative has done about 2,050 shots. And we're going to continue to push in those areas. I mean, we all know here at today's presentation with our

[9:42:16 AM]

team members, you know, it's important that we get those vaccines out as quickly as possible. As far as our outreach for the Travis county mobile collaborative, we have done approximately 1,400 phone calls. We want to thank aid, and the text messages that go out for shot clinics that we have in the areas. We also had almost 1,400 homes and apartments and businesses. You know, it's important, because we want people to know that we're in your community, we're providing that vaccine to you, and we're making it accessible for you. We have some upcoming events that we're excited about. Today we have pan-am hillside and hopefully that weather can hold up for us a little bit because we'll have a vaccine location there. We have reconnect aid this weekend, July 24th. Working with Austin voices. They've done a really good job working in the community and doing outreach working with text messaging and the messaging and

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working with aph and getting the message out there. So we're excited about that. Again, we have grocery store, media push starting July 31st with our Travis county partners. And the dust back-to-school bash on August 7th. You know, what our goal is now is that you heard the message today. We have to start getting vaccines out to those that are most vulnerable, those over 12 years of age, getting our kids under 12 years of age to mask up. You know, my partner chief Bailey is not here right now but he also makes it very clear, this is not a George and Bailey show. This is a Travis county, city of Austin collaborative. I want to thank so many people because this week has been exciting for us. Aisd, and aph, the city of Austin, Travis county, community care, Seton, everybody has a place here. And we're doing our best. But let's continue to push forward and I'll take any

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questions if you have any. >> Judge and mayor, I just would like to quickly share a couple more points. As you heard from constable morales and director Sturrup, the county collaborative and Austin public health continue working together to get strike team events or pop-up events scheduled and coordinated. And I just want to share with you quickly a look at a calendar that we are working on. I want to be careful -- hang on one second, if you would -- sharing my screen. Hopefully you can see that. And I've blanked out the url on this calendar. But this is a calendar that we are working on. Currently it's internal phasing only. But we are working to make sure that we can make this available to the public. And the calendar for the month

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of July right now shows all of the events that we have scheduled between Austin public health and the county collaborative. And you can click on any particular event and see details of what's happening that day, but I think this is informative just so that you can understand the sheer numbers of the events that we are holding. You're seeing some days of the week that seem a little bit lightly scheduled and we are working to overcome some resource challenges, some staffing needs that we have, but we are hopeful that soon making sure that this calendar is kept current on a daily basis so that when we do make it available to the public on our county and city websites, that we can be assured that we're not misinforming the public of anything that we're scheduling. Accompanying this calendar would also be a map to show the actual locations, you know, in map form.

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And then, finally, I just wanted to make sure that y'all understand Dr. Walkes, director Sturrup and I are meeting regularly again with our ISD superintendents on a weekly basis, just to make sure that they remain plugged into everything that we are talking about. You know, all of the questions that we have

and things that we're trying to address. I can -- I can tell you from our meeting yesterday that the superintendent seemed to be struggling with best how to bring students back safely in the fall, how to keep them safe in schools. You know, they're struggling with the governor's most recent executive order that prohibits them from requiring masking. And so while I don't believe Dr. Walkes has all of the answers for them, we continue at least talking with them to make sure that we're hearing their concerns. So I will stop there and turn it over to y'all for questions. >> Judge Brown: Thanks, chuck,

[9:47:19 AM]

and constable. All right, so we'll go through the question portion and remember that we're trying to do it basically one question each and we'll start with the commissioners and then go to councilmembers and I'll recognize commissioner gómez first if you have any questions. >> Ms. Gómez, do you have any questions? >> Gómez: No, I don't have any questions, I just have a comment -- it makes me feel good that our team is out in the community so much, because that's what is going to be needed to do. So I'm very proud of y'all. Thank you y'all. >> Judge Brown: Thanks. Commissioner Shea. >> Shea: Thanks, everyone, and as usual thanks to all of the staff who continue to do an amazing job to keep our communities safe. I was trying to kind of boil down Dr. Walkes' key messages. And I'm not sure that I got them right so I might want you to

[9:48:20 AM]

restate it, but did I understand correctly that there's an 87% -- is it of the people who are -- who have gotten the virus, or who are in the hospital? What is the 87% -- that's what I'm trying to remember. And there are 30 cases in the hospital now, is that correct? Dr. Walkes? >> Sorry, I had to unmute. We have - - in our hospital as of yesterday, we have a total of 196 cases of covid-19 admitted to the hospital. >> Shea: And what was the 87% figure in relation to the delta variant? Or did I not understand that? >> Yes. That was referring to the -- the

[9:49:29 AM]

amount of -- the prevalence or the -- we've had -- well, since we've started to see the delta variant in our county, the amount of it in the community has risen gradually over time. And it is thought that it's been projected that by July 21st, which is tomorrow, that it's expected to represent 87% of the amount of covid-19 that we see in our community. >> Shea: So the key takeaway is that the delta variant is spreading rapidly, and this is bad and it's increasing the infection rate. We have all been hearing how infectious it is and how cautious we have. I don't know what action we can take but I would like gradance on that. The governor has tied our hands to take local action to protect our communities. So any guidance that you could

[9:50:30 AM]

give us on what we can do would be very helpful. Thank you. >> Thank you. My guidance is for people to stop the spread by wearing masks and to get vaccinated to prevent getting sick. And in the case of children, we need to protect them by having them wear masks, because they are unprotected and unvaccinated if they're less than 12. >> Shea: Thank you. >> Judge Brown: Thanks, commissioner Travillion. >> Travillion: Like my colleagues I want to thank everyone for the important and significant work that has been done to this point. I don't know if this made the calendar, but the U.T. School of nursing will be providing shots at the St. John Baptist association which is 150 churches and they'll meeting in Elgin.

[9:51:31 AM]

And I just want to make sure that they have enough shots available so that everyone who is there that would like a shot can have one. If we can -- if we can talk offline and I can connect you to the leadership out there. You guys might have already been talking but if you haven't I would like to connect you. I appreciate -- I appreciate what's been done so far. I just want to say that this is not over yet, and that we have gone back to level three, and we understand that the reason that we're climbing back is the number of people that are unvaccinated. It is -- it is important that we remember that we have to touch everybody that we can to make sure that everyone who wants to take the shot has -- has the resources available to do so. This is a critical time.

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We want to see our kids go back to school. We want to see things go back to normal. That's not going to happen until we get a higher level of vaccination. And so I just want to make sure that we are communicating with everybody who is out there -- every group out there who wants to sponsor a program. We want to make sure -- I love the -- the calendar that you put together so that we can identify and document all those places places that are having back-to-school events. This is still a critical point. And the places in the community that are most impacted are those low-to-moderate income communities and mostly minority communities. So regardless of what the governor says, and he'll have to make his peace with his own maker, we still have a job to do and we are responsible for

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getting as many shots out as we possibly can. So let's redouble our efforts and not let our guard down. Now is not the time. >> Judge Brown: Thank you, commissioner. Dr. Walkes, or -- Adrienne, do we have enough shots for that location? Do y'all have eyes on that? >> Yes, we do. >> Judge Brown: Okay, great. Thanks. Commissioner Howard? >> Howard: Thank you. Thanks for all the hard work. I had a couple of questions. I was curious about the participation with our local media outlets on the messaging. I don't watch much TV anymore, but I'm wondering -- can anybody tell me if we are getting to run some of these cool messages that we've created on local television stations?

[9:54:36 AM]

>> Yes, commissioner. The Pio team for the city and the county are working together to make sure that we are exercising all types of collateral -- so, yes, on TV, on radio, and in print media. >> Howard: Okay, thank you. And I know that Travis county has made some grants, contracts, to several non-profits to help with ppe distribution. Are those organizations -- you don't know, we could talk to Sherri Fleming later, but are they working now on, like, testing and vaccination? Does anybody know? To spread the word. >> Commissioner Howard, I would have to probably get offline and have a conversation with Ms. Fleming and you and we could find out a little more about that. >> Howard: Okay, thank you. To me the big message here is what Dr. Walkes has repeated

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today is that masks stop the spread and vaccines save lives. And I can't even imagine the exhaustion, but we just have to keep at it and, please, call on me to help in any way that I can. Thank you. >> Judge Brown: Thanks, commissioner Howard. I just want to join and say thanks to everybody working hard with this really hard time of a resurgence of the delta variant and covid. And I just want to echo the sentiment of there's a lot of places to get a free vaccine today and tomorrow and this weekend. Please, please go do so. And I'll pass it over to you, mayor, for the councilmember questions. >> Mayor Adler: Okay, great, thank you. I want to see if it's possible for me to -- to share my screen. Just because I think this is something that I think that

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Dr. Walkes tried to pull up. >> Judge Brown: Yeah, we can see it. >> Mayor Adler: You can see it? This is out of the university of Texas model. And this is the icu patients and you can see that we had gotten up to our capacity of 200 back in January, and the community reacted just in time, and we were able to stop reaching that icu capacity number and then we came back down. You can see in July how the numbers ended up. The green line is what the university of Texas modelers in that study that was published yesterday indicate was going to happen with the status quo. That's the green line. The

compliance is compliance with masking. Based on the study in Germany, that Dr. Walkes shared, if people -- if most all people will start wearing masks indoors -- and in Germany they were wearing it on transit and when they went out shopping --

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but, if we get most people to do that you can see how we can stop this increase in icu admissions and keep the number down. If we don't, you can see what it is with moderate compliance and with low compliance. And what we're asking the community to do right now is to be able to achieve that purple line -- the high compliance line. And I would point out that icu capacity back in January was 200. And it's unclear as to whether or not that is something that ultimately we would be able to achieve again, because it's harder now. We have a lot of staff nurses that have retired. And, quite frankly, they're just

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absolutely exhausted, as we all are, but especially the first responders that we have in each of the areas -- nurses and doctors included. So the capacity that we have in icus probably doesn't reach to 200 as we -- as we go forward. And that green line that you saw, that capacity issue, is what is precipitating the ringing of the bell right now. And I hate that once again we're finding our hospitals that are filling up. I would point out that we have the staffing in our hospitals right now for both covid and non-covid patients, because we have the space right now, but what these UT projections are, they're not predictions, they're projections -- they tell us while we have the staffing we need now, the future

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is real uncertain with respect to whether we can sustain that. When our icus fill up, we don't have room for flu patients. We don't have room for heart attack patients, and car accident patients, which is why we have to keep those numbers down. All of our hospitals at this point have asked the state for staffing reinforcement, but we have yet to get indication from the state that they're going to be able to help and assist us, because they're dealing with the same staffing issues that we have. Everybody wants this to be over. The message today is we've got to dig deep and we've got to do everything we can to protect our doctors, and our nurses, and our icus. The most important thing is, take the shot. As the numbers show, you can still get the virus if you're vaccinated. A few are. But it's not severe when that

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happens. 25% of the people who are getting it after they've taken the shot are asymptomatic. They don't even know. The numbers we saw in the nursing homes and long-term care show even among our most vulnerable, when they are vaccinated and get the virus, they're not requiring hospitalization. It's a really small number of people. The vaccination is the thing to do after millions of people have taken it. It's proven to be safe and effective. But after vaccination, the most effective thing that you can do, and what Dr. Walkes is asking people to do now is to wear masks indoors. That's everybody. That's vaccinated and unvaccinated. I know that people who are vaccinated, me included, have really enjoyed being able to go back to the place where we were not wearing masks indoors, a sense of relief, a sense of celebration.

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But we're finding even people that are vaccinated, even though you probably won't end up in a hospital, certainly by in an -- be in an ICU or die, with the delta variant, people who are vaccinated are passing it to other people even when they don't know it. So if we're going to get to that pink line as opposed to the green line, everybody needs to be wearing masking now indoors. I heard Dr. Walkes say that -- and I believe, and I know the judge believes that, you know, we don't want to get involved in a legal issue with the governor. We want to try to avoid that. But if there was a way right now that all students had to wear masks in school, we would be doing that. And we would be doing it for teachers, and for guests in the school. It is that significant and that

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important for people in the community to know and for parent parents to know. So at this point now it's up to individuals, because we can't enforce our way, and we never could, into compliance. I hope that individuals make the decision to wear masks whether -- when they're indoors. I hope businesses that can control their policies have people in their businesses inside wear masks. That's both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. You've heard Dr. Walkes say that we are on the precipice of going to stage four. We can avoid going to stage four. Germany shows us if people wears masks. If we don't and we go to change four, what -- stage four, people that are not vaccinated are going to be asked not to go to restaurants. And they're going to be asked not to go shopping unless it's

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essential. That's the change between where we are today -- asking everybody to mask indoors -- and stage four. We don't want to get there. Clearly the most important thing is to get vaccinated. And then the new rule -- today the new guidance today, the new recommendation today is for everyone to wear masks indoors. And I'll be starting that today for myself and for my family. And I hope everyone does

that. That UT chart is pretty compelling. All right. Let's go through the council. We'll start with the mayor pro tem, and then we'll work our way through district 10. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, mayor. Thank you for the presentation, all. I appreciate the information. I have a couple of questions. My kids went to away camp this summer. One of them is 12, but the other

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is only 11. But there weren't requirements to wear masks. We still have several week of away camp this summer. Are these the types of precautions that we're extending to people who operate away camps, where we have some campers that aren't quite 12 yet? >> Yes. We are recommending that anybody who is unprotected, unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated wear a mask to protect themselves from contracting covid. >> Harper-madison: I appreciate that, Dr. Walkes. I guess what I'm asking is, are we as a municipality, the city of Austin and Travis county, reaching out specifically -- like sunshine camp, they're still running this summer. There's a couple other camps that are still running. Are we reaching out to camps to say as we are on the precipice of reaching stage four again, and we have confirmed cases of delta 4, we need you all to

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be -- to take as many precautions as possible. While I recognize we can't require, I just want to know how we are -- how proactive we're being for that population. >> I understand. We do have individuals in our aph group that are working with various organizations to disseminate the information about the changes in our guidance. >> Harper-madison: And then the one other thing was the 28% number of both vaccinations for black and African American communities. That number is frightening and dismal, and so much lower than every other population. I suppose you can't answer all the questions today, but I certainly would love to be able to get with you, and with director Sturup and commissioner Travillion, and the judge. We've got to figure out how to do something about that number. So, I suppose that's more of a comment than a question.

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Thank you for your time. >> Yes. Thank you. I welcome that opportunity to get your input, too. That's something we're really working hard to achieve, is moving that needle. [Chuckling] >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. I'm going to go out of order. Councilmember pool needs to leave, so I'm going to go to her right now and let her ask her question. >> Pool: Thanks, mayor. I wanted to thank everybody for the unfortunate update. It's really distressing and disappointing to see those numbers go up high -- revert to increasing despite the really good efforts that I know everybody is putting forward. I just want to say

that it is our civic responsibility to be vaccinated. It is an imperative. We must prosecute the med -- protect the medically vulnerable in our community and the children under age 12 who are

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still not able to be vaccinated. It is our civic responsibility as adults to do that. And I am going to continue sounding that alarm and that statement. We had reached 70%, one of the few cities that had gotten to a 70% rate of community vaccination, which was tremendous and a cause for celebration. And now this has happened because of the delta variant. So we all need to double down and triple down as the message has been from everybody who has spoken so far today that we must do everything in our power to convince people, persuade people, and take people to get that jab. It's our civic responsibility. Thanks. And I'm sorry I'm going to have to run off. I have another meeting. But thank you all so much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, councilmember pool. Councilmember Fuentes. Is she with us?

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I didn't see her. Councilmember Renteria I don't think is with us. Councilmember Casar. On the screen, he froze. We'll come back to him. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I don't have questions at the moment. I do want to really thank our staff, first for the messaging today. I think I will just repeat very briefly what everyone has said. What's critical is people getting vaccinated, but also as the mayor and others said, we need to all wear a mask inside. As much as we're at the point now where it feels like we don't need a mask, we must.

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It's all about stopping the spread. And those of us who are vaccinated can do something about that. And we can wear masks inside. And those of our community who are not, we can continue to work with them to encourage people and make it very easy to get vaccinated. So I just wanted to repeat that messaging and thank everyone for all the work that all of you are doing to help people get vaccinated and to encourage people to wear masks. And I will be following your example, mayor, and wearing a mask indoors. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, councilmember kitchen. Councilmember Casar was on and then off. We'll come back to him again. Councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you. There were quite a few concerned residents in Austin, my office has heard from, and they're simply concerned about moving to stage four and additional restrictions on the community. So identity like to hear from -- I'd like to hear from Austin public health what would trigger

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the move to phase four and what restrictions would the community be facing, if any? >> We are going to be moving to stage four when we see a consistent trending of the threshold being crossed of 30 or more cases. We'll be looking at the other factors that impact pandemics, those being the effects on our economy, our schools, our hospitals -- primarily our hospitals -- and our ability to care for people in the middle of a pandemic. And all of those things are taken into account as we make that decision to elevate to the risk-based guidance level of stage four. And what will change is that everyone will be required to wear a mask indoors.

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And we'll also be looking at people not going to participate in certain activities such as going to restaurants, travel, and shopping if they are unvaccinated, because we will need to further restrict interaction so that we can stop the spread of the virus in the community. >> Kelly: Thank you. And just a followup question about that, because I know there was some talk earlier about the governor being involved. Could you help us understand what discussions are being had between the city and the state on the delta variant in anticipation of a possible move to stage four? >> The discussions that I've had with the leadership at the state

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level has been to discuss the situation, and to apprise them of our concerns with the spread in our community. And they support us taking the actions that we need to take thus far, that we've needed to take to protect our community and the public health of our community. >> Kelly: Thank you. >> You're welcome. Thank you. >> Casar: Mayor, sorry, I'm back. >> Mayor Adler: That's okay. We'll go to you now, councilmember Casar. >> Casar: Thank you. I really appreciate everyone. [Audio stopped] >> Casar: Who need it and especially those places where we have so many fewer people that are vaccinated. But I think even despite our best efforts, climbing only 1% a week puts us a really long way

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out of getting all those demographics, especially people of color and low-income people anywhere close to the 70% where we want everyone. And so my question is, you know, despite our very best efforts, it doesn't seem like we are able to grow vaccinations fast enough to get to where we want to go. So, what are we seeing in other parts of the country? Who is doing this well? I just want to figure out is it that we need more financial incentives, need to go more door to door both locally, but nationally and internationally. What are we seeing working or how are we talking to those other places to find out

what will work so that we grow vaccinations at more than 1% a week? >> I'll let you address that, Adrienne. >> So, we have been speaking --

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or I have been speaking with my counterparts that are part of the Texas association of city and county health officials to kind of get a gauge of what they're doing in terms of recommendations around masking, as well as what they are doing to incentivize and to see how they're addressing disparities. Recently I've also reached out to my counterparts in the big cities coalition, as well as looked at some national resources put forth by the national institute of health. All that being said is unfortunately, we're not faring any differently than we are nationwide with respect to the disparities, especially in our black and brown communities. Where we do have some room to grow would be with the financial incentives. Other states have huge lottery programs. There's some discussion about the efficacy of those programs in terms of the data and places

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like Ohio and California. They're just starting to put that together and share with the group. But that's where we're headed. What are the financial incentives that we can offer people to make it feasible for them to take time off of work to come and get a shot, and then in speaking with the equity office yesterday, we have to acknowledge our history of medical racism, right. And so the strategy may be that we begin to have conversations where we acknowledge that at the front and then we continue to bring people along into places where they feel safe and comfortable getting vaccinated. Unfortunately, it took our country a long time to get to this place of mistrust. And it's not something that we are going to be able to undo overnight. But I do think that we can leverage our incentive programs to make a difference with that and continue to have those

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conversations, and continue to support community-based organizations that do have the trust of residents versus, you know, government. And we'll invest. No pride here. We don't have to be the frontrunner at aph. Whoever can get the job done, we're going to support you in those efforts, whether it be financial resources, information, or shots. That's kind of the strategies that we're putting together, but that's what we're seeing locally in Texas as well as across the country. >> Casar: Thank you. I appreciate that you're playing that game of inches. Given the projections that we're being shown, we have to do the masks and get back to a game of yards from a game of inches and do whatever it is we have to do to get there. So if it has to be brought back to the council or the commissioners court, I think you have a very supportive audience of us trying to find whatever is working anywhere in the country

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to get us more than 1% vaccinated a week. I think we have to get there. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: Thank you, mayor. Dr. Walkes, could we get an update on the timeline for the vaccines for children under 12? >> We don't have any new word on when that's going to be approved. We're hoping that it will be before the end of the year. >> Ellis: Thank you. I'm hearing a lot about folks who are worried about their children going back to school, understanding that there's not a lot of virtual options anymore. So we want to make sure we're avoiding situations where adults are inadvertently infecting children and passing that among children who could end up in the hospital. That's a big concern I'm hearing right now. >> Yes. That's why wearing masks, even people that are vaccinated

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wearing masks indoors is going to be important as we try to protect our children. >> Ellis: Thank you. I appreciate that. I will go back to wearing my mask. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Tovo. >> Tovo: Thank you for this information and thank you for working with the school districts to share this new wrinkle and encouraging those who are vaccinated to wear their masks. I know my daughters are participating in various aid activities through the summer, and I've encouraged them to wear their mask and they tell me they are. They tell me most other kids are not. So I think the more we can do to advocate to really share that and make it prevalent among the students who are participating. So many activities are starting up again right now. I had a couple quick questions.

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One is, thank you for the useful information as always. It's very informative. It would be helpful -- I don't think I saw a slide along these lines, but it would be really helpful in future presentations if you're able to have one slide that overlays hospitalizations with vaccination status. I don't think I saw a chart that did both of those things. And I would be very interested to see how that aligns and also how it aligns by age. And then I noticed at least in the data that was presented, my cursory review, it looks as if the -- maybe we could look at this slide. It's the slide for the vaccine breakthrough. My cursory review looks as if the pfizer -- those who are having breakthrough infections, the larger share of them appear to be -- to have received the

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pfizer vaccine. I wanted to ask you if that local data appears to be supported by national trends? Is it a factor of the most people in our area have received pfizer vaccine, or what are some of the conversations around that? Can any meaning be made of the information on that chart in terms of which vaccine individuals received? >> I think that's more a function of the fact that the predominant -- the vaccine that was used predominantly in our area, particularly for older individuals, was the pfizer vaccine, more so than the fact that there's a difference between -- that you can infer from that. >> Tovo: Thank you. And does that seem to be borne

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out by what you and your colleagues are seeing nationwide, that there's not a difference in terms of breakthrough between pfizer and modern? >> It's about the same for both of those vaccines, yes. >> Tovo: Thank you very much. >> You're welcome. >> Mayor Adler: I think, councilmember tovo, in the report out yesterday from some of the hospitals, I think we were told yesterday that everyone in icus in the city, only one person had been vaccinated. But I agree with you, we should start reporting those numbers so the community can see the fact that almost everyone in our hospitals, disproportionately widely are people that have not

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gotten vaccinated. >> Tovo: I agree. I also am interested in the under 30 category to know -- and I know we've had this conversation before -- but it would be interesting to know how many of those under 30 are able to be vaccinated versus not. So to the extent that we can see information with the under 12 category separated out, that would also be useful. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember alter. >> Alter: Good morning. Thank you for these updates. I've gotten requests asking for updated guidance considering our recent trends. I'm going to send this to aph via email as well, but I'm thinking that other people might be asked the same questions as we're in this shifting period. So these congregations have been planning to reopen under the

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guidance and assumptions of the positive trends that we had been seeing, but now given our current situation, they're interested in some guidance on things like how to approach circumstances where congregants will be singing during services and whether masks should be the only guidance. So if you could speak a little bit to that situation, and then to the extent possible, if you could, elaborate in our current legal landscape whether the congregations can require that staff be masked when they serve meals. It's my understanding that a private enterprise can require whatever they want from the masks,

but I wanted to clarify that and also find out who congregations can reach out to if they want to get some specific guidance to talk through their changes.

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>> So, the current guidance is something that everybody can follow. The governor hasn't told people they can't wear masks. He's said that we can't tell people to wear masks. So the fact that we're asking people to wear masks is giving them the personal responsibility to make that choice to do so. And I would recommend that in our current state, where we're close to moving to stage four, that in houses of worship people wear masks indoors. And as we know, when people are projecting their voices, either by shouting or singing, that those infected particles go a longer distance. So social distancing will be

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important. And I've seen in churches where choirs are present and singing that they are accomplishing that by spreading out the members of the choir so that they are not putting themselves at risk by being in the line of fire, so to speak, facing all in the same direction. And then when they finished singing, wearing their masks. So, those types of guidance -- we'd be happy to talk to whoever would like to speak to us about that. And I thank you for the question. >> Alter: I do want to clarify, the congregation itself can decide it wants to require masks. The city can't require them to require masks, but there's nothing legally that prevents the congregation from requiring masks within its house of worship, correct? >> No, there is not. >> Alter: Okay.

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Thank you. I wanted to reiterate, folks have been repeating the messaging of wearing masks and getting vaccines, but I heard a third part which judge brown is exemplifying. If you have symptoms, get tested and stay home. I want to underscore even if you're vaccinated, getting that test if you have a symptom is part of what we need people to be doing. And folks can go to the city's covid website to find free testing locations. And finally, I wanted to ask -- I know my son who is working at a camp has asked me to specifically ask, do you recommend that 3-5-year-olds wear masks? >> Yes, ma'am. The recommendation is that children over the age of 2, if there's no medical reason for

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their not wearing masks, that they should be wearing a mask to protect themselves. >> Great. Thank you so much. I appreciate it. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember alter, you're right in suggesting that there are legal issues associated with the health authority issuing an order for the judge, or me issuing an order not consistent with the governor's decision. We did it at new year's eve and other places, on a court of appeals. It hasn't been decided yet. I wouldn't just say that that legal question has been decided, but the goal is not to end up in court, and to hopefully have the community respond in ways that enable us to be able to protect ourselves. And that's what the focus is. >> Mayor, my concern was to communicate that the congregation has the right to

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require that legally as opposed to what the city could do. >> Mayor Adler: I thought that was a good point, and we're asking businesses and churches to do that if they can. So with that, I want to thank the constable and the county for the work that's happening. Our aph folks, getting out in the community. Councilmember Casar is right. It needs to be going faster somehow if it can, but it's also real significant to see the work that is being done and the number of people -- this is a concerted effort and we have to get faster, better, all the time. I do appreciate everyone's effort. Judge, I turn the floor back to you. >> Judge Brown: Thank you, mayor. And thank you, commissioners and councilmembers, and staff and everybody for working together on this and trying to get the vaccine rate up and get people

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to wear masks indoors. And I'm personally especially concerned about the fact that we cannot vaccinate anyone under 12 years old and we've got school starting in the middle of August. And so I'm really pleased to hear Dr. Walkes recommending that all students and teachers, and people interacting with students under -- especially under 12 -- need to wear masks or should wear masks. And I wholeheartedly agree with that and also with what the mayor said about that. So, I'm going to go ahead and we'll adjourn and come back at 10:35. We'll have a five-minute break. And mayor, I'll pass it over to you. >> We did have at least one caller on the line, and maybe more than one. >> Judge Brown: Yeah. So, we don't. They're calling for another item. But if you want to -- we checked with the attorney and we can't take their calls because the

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agenda for the joint session specifically states members of the public may call 800-304-1055. >> Shea: They missed the comment at the beginning. >> Judge Brown: Public community will only be taken at the beginning of the meeting before the agenda item is called or considered. We unfortunately can't take their calls at this point. But if there's -- an agenda item during the regular meeting, which is typically

item 6, they should be able to -- >> Shea: Call in on item 6? Okay. Thank you. >> Judge Brown: Yep. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Judge, with that here at 10:31, we're going to adjourn the city council portion of this meeting. Colleagues, I think we next gather together at 4:00 on Thursday in chambers, for those that are ready to do that. The community's going to be able to participate, I think, both

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remotely as well as in person. I'll see you guys at 4:00 on Thursday. We're adjourned.